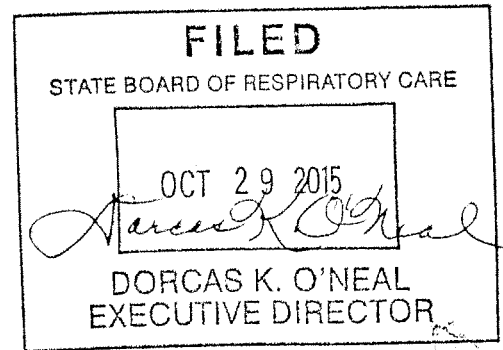


JOHN J. HOFFMAN  
ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL OF NEW JERSEY  
Division of Law  
124 Halsey Street  
P.O. Box 45029  
Newark, New Jersey 07102  
Attorney for the Board of Respiratory Care



By: Virginia Class-Matthews  
Deputy Attorney General  
Telephone (973) 648-3696

STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
DEPARTMENT OF LAW & PUBLIC SAFETY  
DIVISION OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS  
Board of Respiratory Care

IN THE MATTER OF

DEBORAH COTTER, R.T.  
LICENSE NO. 43ZA00532500

TO PRACTICE RESPIRATORY CARE  
IN THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Administrative Action

CONSENT ORDER

This matter was opened to the New Jersey State Board of Respiratory Care upon receipt of information that Stephen Eltringham, R.T. was terminated from his position of Respiratory Therapist at Saint Claire's Healthcare System (SCHS) in Denville, New Jersey for failing to monitor a ventilator for patient K.M. who was in distress and later expired. It was reported that K.M. showed signs and symptoms of a decreasing oxygen saturation ("SO2") in the 60%-70% range (normal 95-100%) and an incorrect FI02 of 40%. The physician ordered the FI02 setting on the patient's ventilator at 100%. It is believed that the ventilator was turned off prior to finding the error and

when it was turned back on the ventilator reverted back to a default setting of 40%.

Through its investigation the Board learned that Deborah Cotter, R.T. ("Respondent") was assigned to patient K.M. on October 2, 2013 starting at 7:00 P.M. until 7:00 A.M. on October 3, 2013. It was Respondent's responsibility to monitor the settings and ensure that the settings were as ordered by the physician. During her <sup>12</sup> ~~seven~~ hour shift she should have known that the settings were at 40% instead of 100%.

Respondent appeared before the Board on February 3, 2015 and explained that she was assigned to K.M. on October 3, 2013 at approximately 2:00 A.M. She advised that she intubated and put K.M. on the ventilator early in the A.M. The alarm flashed "screen time or knob time has run out" which she had never seen before. She reviewed the manual which indicated that this was a low priority alarm and did not compromise the patient's safety. The alarm continued so at about 6:00 A.M. she had a co-worker bag the patient while she shut down the ventilator then restarted it to clear the alarm. K.M. had to be transported for a CAT Scan upon restarting the ventilator. K.M. was placed back on the ventilator upon returning to the unit at about 6:50 A.M. When she placed K.M. back on the ventilator, the settings had defaulted to the factory settings and she was unaware that it had defaulted to those settings. It was not until a day and a half later that she was told that the patient had been on default settings and not on the ordered settings.

She testified that she did not confirm the patient's ordered settings before she gave the hand off report to Stephen Eltringham, respiratory therapist who was assigned to R.M. following Respondent.

Based upon Respondent's testimony on February 3, 2015 and the Board having reviewed documents obtained during the investigation, and the parties being desirous of resolving this matter and avoid further proceedings, Respondent waiving any right to a hearing and the Board finding that she within Consent Order is adequately protective of the public health and safety;

IT IS Therefore, on this 29<sup>th</sup> DAY OF Oct., 2015

HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

1. Respondent is hereby reprimanded pursuant to N.J.S.A. 45:1-21(d) for failing to monitor the ventilator settings and failing to ensure that the settings were as ordered by the physician. Failing to do so constituted neglect.

2. As a condition of continued licensure and pursuant to N.J.S.A. 45:1-22(g), Respondent shall be required to take additional continuing education courses as follows:

a) Patient Safety - 1 credit

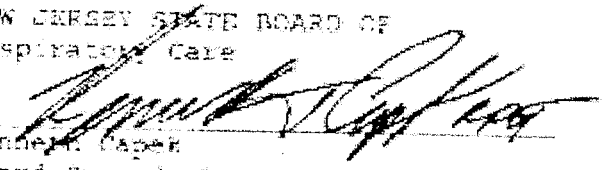
b) Mechanical Ventilation - 3 credits (1 hour shall be related to Servo I or its equivalent)

None of these courses shall count towards CE required pursuant to N.J.A.C. 13:44B-41.

3. Failure to comply with the provisions of this Order may result in subsequent disciplinary proceedings for failure to comply with an Order of the Board.

NEW JERSEY STATE BOARD OF  
Respiratory Care

By:

  
Kenneth Cooper  
Board President

I have read and I understand  
the terms of this Consent Order  
and agree to be bound by it.  
Consent is hereby given to the  
Board to enter this order.

Deborah Cotter

Deborah Cotter, R.T.

9/29/2015

Date

Consented to as to form and entry:



Richard A. West, Esq.  
Attorney for Deborah Cotter